l: Krasheninnikov N-5 (1736-40) 1764 Kamchadal

CHAP. IV

Of the OSTROGS, *or* HABITATIONS, *of the* Kamtſchadales.

UNDER the name of *Oſtrog* we underſtand every habitation conſiſting of one or more huts, which are all ſurrounded by an earthen wall or palliſadoe.

The huts are built in the following manner: they dig a hole in the earth about five feet deep, the breadth and length of which is proportioned to the number of people deſigned to live in it. In the middle of this hole they plant four thick wooden pillars; over theſe they lay balks, upon which they form their roof or cieling, leaving in the middle a ſquare opening which ſerves them for a window and chimney; this they cover with graſs and earth, ſo that the outward appearance is like a round hillock; but within they are of an oblong ſquare, and the fire-place is in one of the long ſides of the ſquare: between the pillars round the walls of their huts they make benches, upon which each family lies ſeparately; but on that ſide oppoſite to the fire, there are no benches, it being deſigned for their kitchen furniture, in which they dreſs their victuals for themſelves and dogs. In theſe huts where there are no benches, there are balks laid upon the floor, and covered with mats. They adorn the walls of their huts with mats made of graſs.

They enter their huts by ladders commonly placed near the fire hearth, ſo that when they are heating their huts the ſteps of the ladder become ſo hot, and the ſmoke ſo thick, as almoſt

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THOSE OF WINTER ARE LESS SINGULAR; AND IF

equally large, would exactly reſemble the
342 habitations of the Ruſſian peaſants. Theſe
177 have been ſo often deſcribed, that it is univer-
352 ſally known how they are conſtructed and
513 arranged. The iſbas are built of wood;
562 that is to ſay, the walls are formed by plac-
ing long trees horizontally upon one an-
other, and filling up the interſtices with
clay. The roof ſlants like our thatched
houſes, and is covered with coarſe graſs, or
ruſhes, and frequently with planks. The
interior part is divided into two rooms, with
a ſtove placed ſo as to warm them both, and
which ſerves at the ſame time as a fire-
place for their cookery. On two ſides of
the largeſt room, wide benches are fixed,
and ſometimes a ſorry couch made of
planks, and covered with bears ſkin. This
is the bed of the chief of the family: and
the women, who in this country are the
ſlaves of their huſbands, and perform all
the

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562 the moſt laborious offices, think themſelves
352 happy to be allowed to ſleep in it.

Beſides theſe benches and the bed, there is alſo a table, and a great number of images of different ſaints, with which the Kamtſchadales are as emulous of furniſhing their chambers, as the majority of our celebrated connoiſſeurs are of diſplaying their magnificent paintings.

342 The windows, as may be ſuppoſed, are
237 neither large or high. The panes are made of the ſkins of ſalmon, or the bladders of various animals, or the gullets of ſea wolves prepared, and ſometimes of leaves of talc; but this is rare, and implies a ſort of opulence. The fiſh ſkins are ſo ſcraped and dreſſed that they become tranſparent, and admit a feeble light to the room*;

* They produce an effect ſomewhat ſimilar to the oiled paper in the windows of our manufactories.

but

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342 yourt, where the women as well as the men go in and out by means of a ladder, or notched beam, that is raiſed to a level with this opening. There is another very low entrance in one ſide of the yourt, but it is conſidered as a kind of diſgrace to
351 make uſe of it. I ſhall terminate the deſcription of the exterior part of theſe habitations by adding, that they are ſurrounded with tolerably high paliſades, doubtleſs as a protection againſt the gales of wind, or falls of ſnow; it is ſaid, however, that theſe enclofures formerly ſerved as ramparts to defend theſe people againſt their enemies.

342 We have no ſooner deſcended theſe ſavage
352 abodes, than we wiſh ourſelves out again; the view and the ſmell are equally offenſive. The interior part conſiſts of one entire room, about ten feet high. A bench, five feet wide, and covered with various ſkins, half worn out, extends all round it. This bench

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352 bench is only a foot from the ground *,
511 and commonly ſerves as a bed for a num-
514 ber of families. I have counted in one yourt more than twenty perſons, men, women, and children. They eat, drink, and ſleep pell mell together, ſatisfy all the calls of nature without reſtraint or modeſty, and never complain of the noxious air that
354 prevails in theſe places. It is true there is
353 a fire almoſt inceſſantly. The fire-place is commonly either in the middle of the yourt or againſt one of the ſides. In the evening they rake the coals in a heap, and ſhut the entrance of the yourt, where the ſmoke ſhould evaporate; and thus the heat is concentrated, and kept up during the whole night. By means of a diſmal lamp, the form and diſagreeable ſmell of which I have before deſcribed, we diſcover in one

* Some of the yourts which I ſaw were floored with planks; but this is regarded as a luxury, and the generality have no other floor than the ground.

corner

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353 corner of the apartment * a wretched image of ſome ſaint, ſhining with greaſe and blackened with ſmoke. It is before theſe images that the Kamtſchadales bow themſelves, and offer their prayers. The reſt of the furniture conſiſts of ſeats and ſome veſſels, made either of wood, or the bark of trees. Their cookery utenſils are of copper or iron; but they are all diſguſtingly filthy. The remains of their dried fiſh are ſcattered about the room, and the women or the children are continually broiling pieces of ſalmon ſkin, which is one of their favourite meats.

352 415 356 511

171 291 854 The ſingularity of the children's dreſs particularly attracted my attention; it is ſaid exactly to reſemble that of the Koriacs. It conſiſts of only one garment, that is, of a

* This nook is in a manner diſtinct from the room, and is leſs filthy, becauſe it is leſs frequented. It is a place of honour ſet apart for ſtrangers.

ſingle